

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-221—sSB 430

Public Safety and Security Committee

Judiciary Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES

SUMMARY: By law, all vehicles, including emergency vehicles, must stop for a school bus displaying flashing red signal lights on a highway or private road, in a parking area, or on school property. The operator must stop at least 10 feet in front of the bus when approaching and at least 10 feet behind the bus when overtaking or following it, except at a traffic officer's direction.

This act allows an emergency vehicle operator, after stopping, to proceed past the school bus as long as he or she does not endanger life or property in doing so. By law, the vehicle must use an audible warning signal, such as a siren, and display flashing or revolving lights, as it must for other motor vehicle law exemptions (see BACKGROUND).

By law, violators are subject to a \$450 fine for a first offense and, for a subsequent offense, a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both (CGS § 14-279(b)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

BACKGROUND

Emergency Vehicle

The law defines an “emergency vehicle” as:

1. an ambulance or vehicle operated by a member of an emergency medical service organization responding to an emergency call,
2. a vehicle used by a fire department or fire department officer while on its way to a fire or emergency call (but not while returning from the fire or call),
3. a state or local police vehicle operated by a police officer or motor vehicle inspector answering an emergency call or pursuing fleeing lawbreakers, or
4. a Department of Correction vehicle operated by a correction officer responding to an emergency call in the course of his or her employment (CGS § 14-283(a)).

Emergency Vehicle Operation

By law, emergency vehicle operators may:

1. park or stand their vehicles notwithstanding other laws;
2. proceed past a red light or stop signal or stop sign after slowing down or stopping to the extent necessary to operate the vehicle safely;

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3. exceed posted speed limits as long as the drivers do not endanger life or property; and
4. disregard statutes, ordinances, or regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specific directions (CGS § 14-283(b)).

The exemptions apply only when the emergency vehicle is using an audible warning signal device, such as a siren, whistle, or bell, and visible flashing or revolving lights that meet standards specified in law (CGS § 14-283(c)).

OLR Tracking: VR:KD:PF:am